

Claims

1. A set of stored instructions that, when read by a programmable processor, results in the processor performing a process, the process comprising:
 - storing meta data information describing media files available on the process' host;
 - receiving over the WAN a connection from a remote client process and a request for at least some of the stored meta data information;
 - communicating to the remote client process the requested meta data information and an identifier for uniquely identifying a media file described by the requested meta data information;
 - receiving a request to transfer the media file, the request including the identifier; and
 - transmitting the requested media file to the media player as a stream.
2. The set of stored instructions of claim 1, wherein the identifier is a uniform resource identifier.
3. The set of stored instructions of claim 1, wherein the process further comprises communicating to a remote server a wide area network address to be used to connect to the process over the WAN.
4. The set of stored instructions of claim 3, wherein the process further comprises determining whether the process is able to receive connections from a wide area network (WAN).
5. The set of stored instructions of claim 1, wherein the process further comprises configuring a network address translation (NAT) router to enable the process to receive connections from the WAN.
6. The set of stored instructions of claim 1, wherein the process runs on a host device connected to a local area network and further comprises automatically discovering other instances of the process running on other host devices connected to the same local area network as the process and connects to the other instances of the process.
7. The set of stored instructions of claim 6, wherein the process reports to the remote server information on the other instances of the process discovered by the process.

8. The set of stored instructions of claim 6, wherein the process receives a request from the remote client process to transmit a media file as a stream to an instance of a local client process running on the same local area network.

9. The set of stored instructions of claim 1, wherein the process further comprises searching the local host for media files and storing meta data describing the located media files.

10. The set of stored instructions of claim 9, wherein the process searches media further comprises searching devices connected with the local host for media files.

11. The set of stored instructions of claim 1, wherein the process is limited to transmitting one stream at a time.

12. A set of stored instructions that, when read by a programmable processor, results in the processor performing a process, the process comprising:

- connecting over a wide area network (WAN) to a central server;
- authenticating with the central server using an identifier;
- obtaining from the central server a WAN address for an agent processes associated with the identifier;
- connecting to the agent process at the WAN address;
- receiving from the agent process information for uniquely identifying on the WAN a media file available for streaming;
- passing to a media player a unique identifier for the media file, which permits the media player to request transmission of the media file as a stream, the identifier including the WAN address for the agent process.

13. The set of stored instructions of claim 12, wherein the unique identifier is comprised of a uniform resource identifier (URI).

14. The set of stored instructions of claim 12, wherein the process further comprises requesting the agent process for information describing media files available for streaming to the client process.

15. A set of stored instructions that, when read by a programmable processor, results in the processor performing a process, the process comprising:

receiving a first connection over a wide area network from a first process;

receiving a second connection from a second process requesting connection to the first process;

forwarding packets received from the second process over the second connection to the first process connecting to a proxy server on the WAN.

16. The set of stored instructions of claim 15, wherein the first connection is identified with a unique identifier , and wherein the second connection identifies the first connection by the identifier.

17. The set of stored instructions of claim 15, wherein the packets are communicating a streamed media file.